

Brief Answers to Missionary Proofs

Today I am going to offer brief answers to some general proofs that missionaries attempt to use as proofs of the truth of Christianity.

The Jews were originally God's chosen people, but they were rejected when they refused to accept His son, Jesus, as their savior.

It is impossible to imagine that God would ever reject the Jewish people. In many places, the Bible clearly states that His covenant with them will be forever. (Bereishit 17:7; Bereishit 26:44; Tehillim 105:8)

Torah Law is too difficult to follow. Only faith is needed.

It is absurd to think that God would give a Torah that was impossible or too difficult to follow. In no place does Judaism teach that one can be saved from damnation by mere belief. (Devarim 30:11-14; Shemot 19:8)

Jesus was the Messiah predicted by the Prophets of the Bible. He is also the Son of God and God Himself.

Jesus could not have been the Messiah. The Prophets predicted a world of peace and love after the Messiah's coming, and this certainly does not exist today. Furthermore, any talk of the Messiah as being the "son of God" is totally unacceptable. In no place do the Prophets say that he will be anything more than a remarkable leader and teacher.

*The Moshiach must be descended from David through Yehuda (Bereishit 49:10) and through Shlomo (Yirmeyahu 23:5; Yirmeyahu 30:7-10; Yirmeyahu 33:14-16; Yehezqel 34:23-24; Yesha'yahu 11:1-9; Hoshea 3:4-5; Divrei Hayamim Aleph 22:9-10).

*The Moshiach will be well-versed in the mitzvot and observant of the mitzvot (Yesha'yahu 11:1-2).

*The Moshiach will be the perfect judge able to see beyond words and appearances (Yesha'yahu 11:2-3).

*The Moshiach will be able to vanquish evil at a word (Yesha'yahu 11:4).

*The Moshiach will be the king of an independent and recognized Yisrael (Yesha'yahu 11:10).

*Eliyahu will precede the Moshiach and announce his arrival (Mal'akhi 3:23-24).

*With the coming of the Moshiach will be the physical ingathering of Yehuda from the four corners of the earth (Yesha'yahu 11:12; Yesha'yahu 27:12-13; Yesha'yahu 43:5-6; Yirmeyahu 16:15; Yehezqel 37:21-22; Zekharya 10:6).

*There will be the reestablishment of the Beit HaMikdash (Yesha'yahu 33:20; Yehezqel 37:26-28; Mikha 4:1).

*There will be world-wide peace (Yesha'yahu 2:4; Yehezqel 39:9; Mikha 4:3).

*The entire world will believe in God (Yesha'yahu 2:3; Yesha'yahu 11:9; Yesha'yahu 40:5; Yirmeyahu 31:33; Zefanya 3:9; Zekharya 8:3; Zekharya: 14:9, 16).

*The Yehudim will be sought for spiritual guidance (Zekharya 8:23).

*Death will cease (Yesha'yahu 25:8).

*The dead will be resurrected (Yesha'yahu 26:19; Yehezqel 37:12-13; Dani'el 12:2).

*The enemy dead will be buried (Yehezqel 39:12).

*The Nations will help the Yehudim materially (Yesha'yahu 60:5, 10-12; Yesha'yahu 61:6).

*Each Tribe of Yisrael will receive its inheritance (Yehezqel 47:13-14).

*Eternal joy and gladness will characterize the Yehudim (Yesha'yahu 51:11).

*The river of Mizrayim will run dry (Yesha'yahu 11:15).

*Trees will yield new fruit monthly in Yisrael (Yehezqel 47:12).

*The nations will recognize the wrongs they did to Yisrael (Yesha'yahu 52:13-53:12).

*Yisrael will be perfect in the practice of Torah (Devarim 30:6; Yirmeyahu 31:31-33).

*All of Yisrael will be prophets (Yoel 3:1-2).

*The Moshiach will be universally recognized (Yesha'yahu 11:10).

We can see from Matthew 24:34 that Jesus expected the Messianic age and the kingdom of heaven to begin during – or shortly after – his own lifetime. There is no mention of a “second coming”.

The only thing that can prevent man's utter damnation in “hell” is the belief in Jesus.

The Tanakh does not teach that one can be saved from damnation by mere belief. Sacrifices are not required to attain forgiveness. In fact, sacrifices are considered the lowest form of teshuvah (repentance). Any true belief in God must lead a person to follow His mitzvot (Shemu'el Aleph 15:22; Shemu'el Aleph 12:13; Hoshea 6:6; Mishle 21:3).

Since Jesus is the Jewish messiah a person can believe that Jesus is the messiah and remain Jewish.

A Jewish person does not believe that Jesus is the messiah or God-incarnate. If a person is born of a Jewish father or converts to Judaism then that person is forever a Yehudi. If that same person follows another religion then he or she is an apostate Yehudi (Yirmeyahu 10:2).

Joseph passed on his descent from David via adoption of Jesus.

There is no biblical basis of passing on a tribal affiliation through adoption. If the line of Joseph in the Book of Matthew (1:12) is correct, Joseph is ineligible for the throne of David because he comes from the cursed line of Yekhonya (Yirmeyahu 22:30).

Jesus occupies the ceremonial privileges and status as first born and Jesus is always referred to as the only son of God.

Yisrael is God's first-born son (Shemot 4:22).

God shared his glory with Jesus (John 1:1).

God stated that His honor would not be given to another so the enemies shall not say that their deities are powerful (Yesha'yahu 48:11).

Jesus was created and therefore not eternal (Colossians 1:15).

Jesus never rebuked others for worshipping him – thus proving that he is God in the flesh (Matthew 8:2).

Jesus did in fact rebuke others for worshipping him (Mark 10:18).

There will be a pre-tribulation rapture.

Pre-tribulation (or pre-tribulation rapture) is the belief that Jesus will come secretly to gather up all the true believers before the beginning of a tribulation period. These true believers will be taken into heaven in order to escape the horrendous judgments that will take place during the tribulation.¹

The alleged proof-text from the Tanakh is Mikha 7:1-2: *Woe is me! I have become like leavings of a fig harvest, like gleaning when the vintage is over, there is not a cluster to eat, not a ripe fig I could desire. The pious are vanished (אָבַד) from the land, none upright are left among men; all lie in wait to commit crimes, one traps the other in his net.*²

First let's deal with the Hebrew word אָבַד (avad). Avad does not only mean "to cause to disappear" but can also mean to be destroyed, to vanish, to be lost, or to go astray. It does not necessarily mean to disappear but can mean to go astray or become lost.

We can see this when we look at Devarim 22:3 which reads: “*You shall do the same with his ass; you shall do the same with his garment; and so too shall you do with anything that your fellow loses (תֵּאָבֵד) and you find: you must not remain indifferent.*”²

In Mikha we see that the prophet is bemoaning the fact that the people are unrighteous and non-receptive to his prophecies. It does not mean that the people have disappeared from the earth.

We see in the previous chapter that Mikha is calling to the people to repent and return to God. For if the people continue in their wicked ways in the decrees of Omri and Ah'av they will be punished.

*Mikha 6: 9, 16: Then will your name achieve wisdom. Hark! יהוה summons the city: Hear O sceptor; for who can direct her ... Yet you have kept the laws of Omri, and all the practices of the House of Ah'av, and have followed what they devised. Therefore I will make you an object of horror and her inhabitants an object of hissing; and you shall bear the mockery of peoples.*²

So what is this chapter of Mikha all about? It is most certainly not about a supposed pre-tribulation rapture.

Mikha begins by bemoaning his role as a prophet to an unrighteous nation. All the leaders – the nobles, officials, and judges – are corrupt. The people listen to false prophets but when they expect good based upon false prophecies Mikha says that they will only reap punishment. Mikha declares that despite the people’s shortcomings he will remain faithful to God. Mikha prophesies the exchange that will occur between Yisrael and their oppressors. The oppressor will tell Yisrael that their day of salvation will never come. However, Mikha – replying on behalf of Yisrael – states that Yisrael’s salvation will come and that day will bring punishment to the oppressor nations. The chapter ends with Mikha asking for God’s blessings and protection for Yisrael. God responds by offering a pledge of great miracles. Mikha goes on to describe the final humbling of the nations and their future reverence for God. This chapter closes with Mikha asking God to fulfill His promises to the patriarchs to preserve their descendants and give them the Land of Yisrael.

Now let’s look at the idea of the pre-tribulation rapture and see if, according to the Christian texts and teachings, it is even a truthful, Biblically-based idea.

The scriptural basis for the pre-tribulation belief is First Thessalonians 4:17 which reads: “*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*”³

Pre-Tribulationism was unknown to the early Church; in fact, no one has been able to show that this particular doctrine was held by any of the church Fathers or Biblical scholars before the early nineteenth century. It apparently originated at this time during a great revival of interest in Biblical prophecy. In 1830, a young Scottish woman named Margaret McDonald claimed to have received a “revelation” that Christians would be raptured before the Great Tribulation. Shortly after this, the idea spread to London where it aroused much interest. In further “revelations” during this period, dates for the rapture were variously fixed between 1835 and

*1847! Pre-Tribulationism was first taught publicly at a series of prophetic meetings in Powerscourt House, Ireland. ... The greatest growth of this teaching, however, has been in the twentieth century mainly through the Modern Dispensational teachings of the Scofield Reference Bible.*⁴

The 1917 Scofield Reference Bible commentary on First Thessalonians 4:17 declared that “Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved, of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection.”⁵

Scofield goes on to cross-reference this idea with his commentary on First Corinthians 15:52. “Two resurrections are yet future, which are inclusive of “all that are in the graves” John 5:28. These are distinguished as “of life” ; 1 Corinthians 15:22,23; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; Revelation 20:4 and “of judgment” ; John 5:28,29; Revelation 20:11-13. They are separated by a period of one thousand years Revelation 20:5. The “first resurrection,” that “unto life,” will occur at the second coming of Christ 1 Corinthians 15:23 the saints of the O.T. and church ages meeting Him in the air 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 while the martyrs of the tribulation, who also have part in the resurrection Revelation 20:4 are raised at the end of the great tribulation.”⁵

Another passage of the Christian texts used to try and prove pre-tribulation ideas is Revelation 3:10: “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”³

This passage cannot be used as a proof text for three reasons. First, this text is specifically addressed to the church in Philadelphia only. Second, the text indicates that the time of trial is at hand. Lastly, The Philadelphia church actually experienced these trials shortly after this text was written.¹

The texts that are used as proof of a pre-tribulation rapture do not explicitly state that there will indeed be a rapture before the Tribulation. This doctrine must therefore simply be inferred and is not an explicit teaching of the Christian Scripture.⁴

Matthew explicitly states that Jesus taught that there will be only one rapture at the end times.

*Matthew 24:29-31: Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give it slight; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*³

Paul also taught that there would be only one rapture: “But each with his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” (I Corinthians 15:23-24)³

The whole idea of Mikha prophesying about a pre-tribulation rapture is based upon the false belief in a pre-tribulation rapture. Therefore, the assertions made about any such occurrence are completely false.

¹Schwertley, Brian. "Is the Pretribulation Rapture Biblical?" *reformedonline.com*. Reformed Online Library. 1999. Web. 25 December 2011.

[<http://reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/rapture.htm>]

²David Stein (ed.). *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

³Zondervan Corporation. *Holy Bible: New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1984.

⁴"The Rapture." *inplainsite.org*. In Plain Site. n.d. Web. 25 December 2011.

[http://www.inplainsite.org/html/the_rapture.html]

⁵Scofield, C. "Scofield Reference Bible." *studylight.org*. Study Light. 1917. Web. 25 December 2011. [<http://www.studylight.org/com/srn/>]

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